LES DÉMOCRATES

ET

LES ARISTOCRATES

OU

LES CURIEUX DU CHAMP DE MARS.[1]

The Democrats and the Aristocrats or the Curious of the Champ de Mars.[2]

One act comedy in prose and vaudeville.

CHARACTER'S NAMES.[3]

M. DE BÉLISLE - an officer of the National guard, impartial.
FATHER AMBROISE - blind, his dog Jacot, both are aristocrats.
FRONTIN - M. de Bélisle's servant.
SUZON.
BERTRAND - a simpleton.
A SENTRY - Suzon's lover.
LA FLEUR - a servant and democrat.
LA JEUNESSE - an aristocrat.
THE MARQUISE DE LA BRANCHE DU BLASON - an aristocrat.
M. LE CHEVALIER DU ROCHER.
M. SÉNÉ - a doctor and democrat.
M. RAPINE - procurator at the Châtelet.[4]
M. POIGNARDIN - a writer of tragedies.
M. DE L'ECUSSON - a genealogist.
AN OFFICER.
A BOURGEOIS.
A PATROL.

ACT ONE

The set represents lower Chaillot, opposite the champ de Mars: in the distance one can see the river.

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1 The play is referred to both as *Les Aristocrats et le démocrats* and *Les Démocrats et les aristocrats*: de Gouges's biographer Olivier Blanc uses the former, the version I used for my translation used the latter.

2 This short satirical play, probably written in the second half of 1790, is set during the festival of July of that year which celebrated the first anniversary of the fall of the Bastille. It humorously portrays individuals responding to the political changes that have turned their society upside down. They are all affectionately drawn, often espousing views that make a nonsense of proscriptive rules. The badinage between the characters evokes a period before the Terror when people were freer to express their views without fear of retribution. It is a delightful, quasi-sociological, view of that moment in time. The author could not have known that her portrayal of the poet Poignardin's arrest for writing an imaginary attack on the king, would foreshadow her own, fatal, experience three years later.

3 Many of the names are jokes at the expense of the characters e.g. *blason* is a coat of arms and *branche* refers to the branch in a family tree, *séné* is the laxative senna, *rapine* is as the English (lawyers being universally rapacious one presumes), *poignarder* is to stab and may be a joke at the expense of all the male writers who stab each other in the back to gain favour, *ecusson* is a heraldic shield.

4 The Châtelet was a central Parisian law court, prison and home to the police service. From January 1791 it ceased to be anything but a prison.

FIRST SCENE

FATHER AMBROISE, M. DE BÉLISLE, FRONTIN.

M. DE BÉLISLE.

Have a rest, my friend; how can you put yourself in harm's way on such a crowded day as this. Without my help the poor devil would have suffocated.

FATHER AMBROISE and HIS DOG.

What will you have me do, my good officer? It's poverty that has driven me and my Jacot from our lodgings: we've not eaten a thing in two days.

FRONTIN.

Neither one nor the other will die of indigestion; he talks of his dog as he would a friend.

M. DE BÉLISLE.

Frontin, take this unfortunate blind man to the nearest auberge and pay his victuals for a month!

FRONTIN.

What a good master! If all the people of quality were like him, they would have many more supporters.

FATHER AMBROISE.

What a great man! What a good human being! Many thanks my good officer: I won't forget to recommend you to the blessed Barbara and the brave St George. If Jacot would jump for the nation, the law and the king as he once jumped for the king, the queen, his lordship the dauphin and all the royal family, I would show you, my good officer, that Jacot's not so stupid. I could earn my living with him, as before. Aristocrat's dog! Now, thanks to your obstinacy we'll both die of hunger.

FRONTIN.

Ah! the funny old blind chap.

M. DE BÉLISLE.

The poor man!

FATHER AMBROISE.

Ah! Marry, Sir, the new constitution weighs us down. It's fine and proper to say the new one's the best, but the old one, it seems to me, is drawn from the holy scriptures.

FRONTIN.

Let's listen to him.

M. DE BÉLISLE.

This is novel. By heaven, let's enjoy talking politics with this blind man. Friend, how do you understand it, and who told you that the old constitution was so ancient.

FATHER AMBROISE.

No one, my good officer, it's what I made out for m'self and you'll find the same if you care to. Make the sign of the cross and you'll see right enough that what I said were right.

M. DE BÉLISLE.

What nonsense! I see no connection between this sign and the old constitution.

FATHER AMBROISE.

It's in the words, my good officer, it's in the words. (G*ravely.*) In the name of the father, that's to say in the name of the King, ain't the King the father of all his subjects? In the name of the son, isn't that the nation that encloses all his children. And the holy ghost, that's the law that affects all things.

FRONTIN.

Not so foolish.

M. DE BÉLISLE.

Truly, one finds that these ignorants have ideas not revealed by thirty years of study.

FATHER AMBROISE.

What's that you say, my good officer, didn't I say right? Jacot doesn't want to let it go; you see, he's as religious as they come, my good officer.

FRONTIN.

As religious as they come, and he's referring to a dog. Truly, this blind man's got no idea that he's a heretic. That's just how we are! The places religion chooses to find a home![5]

M. DE BÉLISLE.

My friend you don't know what you are saying; do not speak of this out loud, you will be taken for an aristocrat....A blind aristocratic beggar! Who would do him harm. No. These days feelings are too reasonable, too calm, to find fault with a comparison, or an ingenious thought. Go, my friend, go and refresh yourself and take good care of yourself. Frontin give him my address, I want to help this poor unfortunate. Lead him by the arm.

FRONTIN.

Shan't fail Sir. He entertains me so much I can't not take an interest in him. Come, come, father Ambroise, I'll see to it that you get a decent glass of port.

FATHER AMBROISE.

Farewell, my brave soldier, I'll pray for you to the happy, brave, St Clair. Come Jacot, walk in front of the lad**.**

SECOND SCENE.

THE MARQUISE DE LA BRANCHE DU BLAZON, THE CHEVALIER DU ROCHER, M. DE BÉLISLE.

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5 This sentence ‘Où la religion va se nicher’ is a reference to a phrase famously attributed to Molière. In his *Life of Molière* Voltaire recounts that the playwright gave a beggar a gold coin, the beggar returned it assuming it to have been a mistake, the playwright replied: ‘Où la vertu va-t-elle se nicher’.

MDE DE LA BRANCHE.

Is that you, my dear Rocher, I'm beside myself, I can't breathe, I'm dying. So it's done then! No more hope of a counter-revolution.

M. DU ROCHER.

See how this other one goes on about a counter-revolution; say no more.

M. DE BÉLISLE.

Here are two odd creatures, I'll pretend to wander along so as to be entertained by their conversation.

MDE DE LA BRANCHE.

I'll speak of it as long as I live. What name do you suppose has been designated to succeed that of Marquise de la Branche du Blason? That of madame Cornu.[6] From now on I will be madame Cornu! And I will lose an illustrious name and the rights of an ancient race.

M. DU ROCHER.

Ancient, billy goat, faggot, say no more.

MDE DE LA BRANCHE.

Say no more. Oh! That is not how I give up my prerogatives.

M. DU ROCHER.

Prerogatives of the old regime, say no more.

MDE DE LA BRANCHE.

I'll know how to properly protect the rights transmitted by my ancestors.

M. DU ROCHER.

Your ancestors, your ancestors. Well well! They're dead, say no more.

MME DE LA BRANCHE.

The nobility will awake from its lethargy. I myself will cross-quarter the kingdom to incite it against the oppression of the supposed patriots.

M. DU ROCHER.

You will lose your way, so say no more.

MDE DE LA BRANCHE.

The people are triumphant now, but we have patience on our side, time, subtlety and reason; a thousand means which, used prudently, will be effective.

M. DU ROCHER.

I tell you, you'll only make hot air, and believe me, you'll be better off; say no more.

MDE DE LA BRANCHE.

But, accursed man that you are, are you thus joining the democrat party?

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6 *Cornu* means horned and carries all the usual associations of cuckoldry as picked up by Du Rocher who mentions billy goats, a euphemism for lecher. Faggot might suggest that he thinks Mme de la Branche is speaking heresy for, in past times, wearing the image of a faggot symbolically marked a person out as a heretic, one who had avoided being burnt at the stake.

M. DU ROCHER.

The democrats, the democrats, and the aristocrats; say no more.

MDE DE LA BRANCHE.

You, confidant of the former king, you who were showered with favours by the court, you will let yourself be swept along on a popular torrent and not even shudder at the upheaval of all the old ways.

M. DU ROCHER.

Say no more. I had a few pensions, they will be diminished. So be it! I'll still be free to wander at my ease in the Palais Royal, and be surrounded by the nymphs of that garden asking me for barley-sugar. *He takes out his box.* Here, would you like some.[7]

MDE DE LA BRANCHE.

Go, old fool, you are indeed worthy of serving as their plaything.

M. DU ROCHER.

Listen, Madame Cornu, erstwhile marquise de la Branche du Blason, we all take our pleasure where we find it. I prefer a hundred pretty faces to all your parchments. Say no more.

MDE DE LA BRANCHE.

Well that's fine. I was too kind to spend time with such a fool.

M. DU ROCHER.

And I too good-natured to listen to such a silly conceited woman; say no more.

MDE DE LA BRANCHE.

Insolence! If my servants were here I would teach you to show respect to a woman of my quality.

M. DU ROCHER.

Farewell, Madame Cornu, my lady of quality. Oh! Say no more.

MDE DE LA BRANCHE, *exiting from another side.*

Oh! I would willingly tear your eyes out if I had the strength.

THIRD SCENE.

M. DE BÉLISLE, *alone.*

Nothing could be more original than the conversation I have just overheard. The place is used as a thoroughfare by those who want to avoid the crowds, while I'm on duty and can't be on the champ de Mars. By heaven, I'll have fun listening to the conversations of the passers by. Meeting the blind man and the conversation of that renown knight have piqued my curiosity. So many different people will pass through. I can see a young girl approaching, my word, she is pretty, she is arm in arm with a kind of simpleton, maybe he's her lover or her brother. Let me sit here pretending to read.

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7 A woman such as Mme de la Branche would, once out of childhood, have always been addressed formally using *vous.* The use of the informal *tu* here would have been striking as its unconditional usage was not seriously discussed until the Autumn of 1792. *Tu* was only made obligatory in Paris, and encouraged elsewhere by a directive from the Committee of Public Safety in October 1793; the use of *vous* was dangerous, particularly in the capital, but many found old habits of good manners hard to break.

FIFTH SCENE.

[There is no fourth scene; this seems to be a typographical error rather than an omission.]

MADEMOISELLE SUZON, M. BERTRAND.

BERTRAND, *crying.*

It's all your fault, Mademoiselle Suzon, that I shan't see the ceremony, you did it on purpose and you lost your father and mother like this to come and rove around your lover. Oh! We're not as silly as we seem.

SUZON, *looking artfully at the sentry.*

What on earth do you mean? Well I never, would we be suggesting that I'd be a girl to seek out the boys.

BERTRAND.

Yes, zounds, you are one; did you think that I was blind? And that I couldn't see that he is here, a sentry? And another thing, another thing, Mamzelle Suzon, I'm not a ninny at home because my father always slaps me. For now, I've an open mind...

SUZON.

Indeed, you seem to me to be very alert! Who's responsible for this prodigy? But be assured, Monsieur Bertrand, that however shrewd you are, you're mistaken with regard to me for if I got lost in the crowd it was quite innocently done and was none of my fault.

BERTRAND.

None of your fault? Well it's too true what they say, you have wit! And why then have you made me leave the champ de Mars? It's not good of of you. Over there my soul and my mind was uplifted, and you've dragged me here where I can't see no one but a sentry who plays tricks on you and you just makes eyes at him. Here, you'll see, I'm going to leave you with 'im and you can get y'rself out of trouble any way you can while I'll at least see the ceremony.

SUZON.

Ah, my poor Bertrand, don't leave me on my own, my parents will mistreat me and it'll be your fault.

BERTRAND, *looking at the sentry.*

Gosh, look how he salutes you. I swear he's presenting arms to you. Well, 's'not every day I sees that exercise and a sentry's forbidden to present arms 'cept to officers. But what a crowd! And heavy weather's coming. What if I gets wet? Oh! It's no matter. Ah! It'll be grand. Hey, hey, here's the scaffolders coming. Good, I'll get in first seeing as I got here first.

SIXTH SCENE.

PRECEDING ACTORS, GAGNE DENIER [Not mentioned in list of characters], SEVERAL MALE AND FEMALE CITIZENS, BERTRAND, SUZON, THE SENTRY.

GAGNE DENIER.[8]

Come along, Gagne Petit [Not mentioned in list of characters.], let's get a move on, these good people will see as well as if they were beside the King, which is a surer thing than for those further from him. Come along, roll up only six sous a seat.

THE SENTRY.

Who gave you permission to set up here? Take those boards away from here, they're not in my directive.

GAGNE PETIT.

Honk, honk, see how the gander's getting in a fluster, if he became Malbrouk he couldn't be fiercer.[9]

BERTRAND, *whispering to Suzon.*

Mamzelle Suzon, Mamzelle Suzon, it's up to you to sort this out, if you speak to him you'll see, he'll let the scaffolders carry on and that'll mean I'll see the cer'mony.

SUZON.

I'll have a go just to oblige you. For myself I'm quite incurious.

BERTRAND.

Oh well said, have a go, means I'll manage to see the confed'racy. Go to, go to.

SUZON, *to the sentry.*

Mister Sentry, with your permission, if it's not too much trouble, would you be willing to allow me to climb on those boards, I won't create a problem for the celebration.

THE SENTRY.

Mademoiselle, someone as amiable as yourself has no need to solicit a favour; our general, by the way, wished us to accommodate the fairer sex, therefore you may, with your amiable companion...

SUZON.

Mister Sentry, you've thrown me into a confusion...

BERTRAND, *aside.*

Gosh, how she chirrups out her compliments! Oh how lovely that will be. Ah! It'll be grand, it'll be grand, it'll be grand.[10]

THE SENTRY.

Climb up on the boards and watch, at your leisure, and so that no harm befalls you I will mount guard by your side.

A FISHWIFE.

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8 These new characters are also humorously named i.e. earn a bob, earn a little.

9 Malbrouk refers to the first Duke of Marlborough (1650 – 1722) who famously defeated the French in the early 1700s: his reputation as a skilled commander was such that he became the subject of a popular French song, still sung today. So constant and universal was his renown that Napoleon ordered a new bust of the Duke to place among the greats adorning his private gallery.

10 Bertrand repeats *Ça ira* three times showing he is familiar with the latest revolutionary song. It dates from May or June 1790 when its lyrics were innocent of its later call to hang aristocrats and clergy from lampposts; the incendiary lyrics were probably added in the summer of 1792.

Here, look how he's softened up, wouldn't you say he takes us for dogs and see how that little flibbertigibbet has got one up on us.

A CITIZEN.

What's that to you, are you jealous of her, just climb up. Whatever happens the aristocracy of the beautiful and the rich will never be destroyed.

A FISHWIFE.

Oh leave us alone with your stories.

SEVENTH SCENE.

LA FLEURE, LA JEUNESSE *in livery* AND PRECEDING ACTORS.

LA FLEURE.

What, what, still in the proscribed attire. So, my dear Jeunesse, you obviously want to swing from a lamppost.

LA JEUNESSE.

I'm no longer in a fit state: my master let me have my clothes that were no longer of any use to him, and, having no money to have new ones made, as you can see, I have kept my suit, and in despair I will drive a hackney carriage, that's where escutcheons and livery play a great role these days.[Missing text?]...everyone has a burlesque passion for them, particularly women; witness my old marquise who in a fury threw her wig and her false teeth out of the window; best of all, the spoils of her charms fell on the head of a national guard who officiously wanted to return them to her. Happily as I was following in his footsteps I was able to stop him.

M. DE BÉLISLE.

I find this all a real comedy.

LA JEUNESSE.

That is well and good but I do not find our situation so pleasing. The nobility, my friend, is a tree whose roots, it is true, are too damaging to the growth of other plants, but we were the branches of this tree and by pulling it up we feel its downfall.

LA FLEURE.

Oh well! We'll just find another way, all is in a state of confusion, that's the effect of great revolutions, who the devil isn't touched by this one.....but I hear music, there, it's the King and the Nation arriving; let's go, quick.

They exit.

EIGHTH SCENE.

M. POIGNARDIN, THE PRECEDING ACTORS.

M. POIGNARDIN, *holding a pencil and a manuscript in his hand and striding around the stage.*

What a denouement! Daughters of Tartarus, Eumenides! Inspire me...

He continues to write.

NINTH SCENE.

M. POIGNARDIN, THE PRECEDING ACTORS *and a patrol at the back of the stage*.

A CITIZEN.

Gentlemen, I have followed him from the rue Tarrane; he is ill-intentioned; he is a new sort of conspirator, he speaks his plans out loud.

M. DE BÉLISLE.

This demands my attention, let me see.

THE OFFICER.

Be quiet, just listen.

M. POIGNARDIN.

This will be the ultimate blow! The guard on this side, the King on horseback and the traitor waiting for him to pass by, runs, throws himself on his master and the King dies.

THE OFFICER, *to his guards.*

And the King dies, guards, seize this traitor.

The guards seize M. Poignardin by the collar.

M. POIGNARDIN.

Hey! Gentlemen, what do you want! You're mistaken, I'm a good citizen, I swear it.

THE OFFICER.

Infamous man you are planning to assassinate the king.

M. POIGNARDIN.

Eh! It's the King in my tragedy.

THE OFFICER.

What?

M. POIGNARDIN

Yes, I assure you, my name is Poignardin, writer of tragedies, and if you doubt it, cast an eye over my manuscript and you will see that I had reached the denouement which, thanks to you, I have failed to achieve.

THE OFFICER.

Could I have been mistaken, let me see, he's right, he is a poet, how imprudent we have been. A thousand pardons, sir, for the false alarm that led us to cause your agitation, but as you know, we are surrounded by traitors, we adore the monarch and all true Frenchmen watch over his days.

THE POET.

I approve of your zeal but you have caused me to miss the best coup de théâtre of the dramatic stage. Farewell gentlemen. This national guard is very rash.

M. DE BÉLISLE.

What a lesson! What a good thing that I didn't show myself, but here are yet more extraordinary figures.

TENTH SCENE.

RAPINE, SENÉ.

SENÉ.

It's all very well your saying that your status is gone, it's true that one won't see fortunes accumulate so rapidly among lawyers, but one will also no longer be able to say that that rogue of a procurator ruined twenty families, rather one will say there's an honest arbiter, an impartial judge, a friend of peace who sacrifices himself for the good of his fellow citizens.

RAPINE.

Can I, like you, admire the ruins from which this much lauded constitution arises! You are free, Mister Sené, to reason as you will, the National Assembly will hardly decree against death or prevent the sick from having a foolish confidence in doctors.

SENÉ.

You must admit that lawyers were ripe for having limits imposed upon their rapaciousness.

RAPINE.

Limits! Are there any at the moment? Nothing is sacred and you must admit that the charlatanism of your doctors has great need of being reduced to silence and that a decent decree, better than all those that have overturned the state, should teach you that you are the true enemies of humankind, and that procurators, on the contrary, support and defend it.

M. DE BÉLISLE.

This conversation isn't going to end well but it will keep me greatly amused.

SENÉ.

Is there anything more dangerous, in a state, than that perfidious art of embracing the best causes and then seizing, thanks to a formality, the wealth of the widow and the orphan?

RAPINE.

Is there anything more criminal than the ignorance of the doctor who poisons his patients instead of curing them?

SENÉ.

The procurator's chamber is like a thieves' cavern, you go in rich and come out a beggar.

RAPINE.

The doctor's laboratory is like a lion's den, you go there in confidence but you never come out again.

SENÉ.

What about that inheritance of four hundred thousand *livres* whose distribution you so skilfully jumbled up that it led to a hundred thousand *écus* of legal fees.

RAPINE.

What about that large family whose survival depended on the father who has just died at your hands as a result of a mild indisposition that you skilfully rendered serious. Did you not demand the payment of two hundred and thirty-nine visits, of one hundred and eighty-seven prescriptions, of a hundred and fifty bleedings, of eighty physics and six hundred purges; didn't the unhappy widow have to part with her last assets to satisfy your demands?

SENÉ.

Insatiable leech.

RAPINE.

Licensed assassin, notorious poisoner.

SENÉ.

Public thief.

They tear off each other's wigs.

The other actors run forward.

M. DE BÉLISLE.

I could have sworn to it. Eh? Gentlemen, what are you doing?

BERTRAND.

Oh my god what a racket.

A CITIZEN.

Gentlemen, leave them to it; it's a procurator and a doctor, there's no harm in that breed destroying itself.

The preceding actors and a patrol.

M. DE BÉLISLE.

Hush, hush, gentlemen, what a scandal you dare expose to the whole of France assembled here to swear the pact of the most fraternal union.

SENÉ.

He's an aristocrat.

RAPINE.

He's an incendiary demagogue, take care that he doesn't escape.

M. DE BÉLISLE.

Eh, gentlemen, could you not express your opinions without descending to this reprehensible excess? You seem to belong to a state that commands decency. If the august ceremony that is about to start does not electrify your souls, at least let the friends of the motherland rejoice in peace. Listen, can you hear those cries of joy?

BERTRAND.

Let's have a rest. (*They climb on to the scaffolding. Music can be heard in the distance.*) Run. See the troops march past.

M. DE BÉLISLE.

Here's another odd fellow, from his appearance I would say he was a Gascon; he seems very dour. If he could watch the ceremony with these good people perhaps his mood would brighten.

BERTRAND.

Here, look at that one, and t'other coming over there. Oh! What a queer looking fellow.

They all begin to move downstage.

LAST SCENE.

M. DE L'ECUSSON, M. POIGNARDIN, M. DU ROCHER, THE PRECEDING ACTORS.

M. DU ROCHER.

Ah! I'm in luck, I've run about all over the place, unable to see anything, say no more.

POIGNARDIN.

No, I'll never ever find my denouement. This pomp, this apparatus seemed to inspire me to a new coup de théâtre, it is certainly new, but not one citizen resembles a traitor, for we all love a monarch.

M. DE L'ECUSSON.

All these people look like democrats to me. There's nothing to be gained among them, let's go.

M. DE DELISLE, *stopping him*.

My friend, you seem agitated. Are you out of sorts, do you need anything?

M. DE L'ECUSSON.

His friend, his friend, how familiar these national guards have become!

M. DE BÉLISLE.

Monsieur, may I enquire who you are? I am vexed to have been mistaken.

M. DE L'ECUSSON.

My name is de l'Ecusson, genealogist.

M. DE BÉLISLE.

Would you by any chance be from that class of former gentlemen.

M. DE L'ECUSSON.

If I am indeed, fine question; I create them. I brought more than two hundred marquises into existence, six hundred counts, two thousand barons, without counting my kind of knight whose numbers outweigh all the grains of sand in the sea: everyone who came to me in order to climb into his majesty's carriage had cause to praise my services for I let down none of them. The Gascons made me work the hardest; it's a shame they pay so poorly. I have just this moment left one who swore, facing the altar to the motherland, that he would rather lose his clothes than let go of one of his titles. What nobility! What strength of character! In truth these Gascons are admirable.

M. DE BÉLISLE.

You don't seem to me to be too keen on the revolution.

M. DE L'ECUSSON.

It crushes me. I have nothing but water to drink. I had just finished a family tree that went back more than eight hundred years. The man for whom I took on this work refuses to pay me stating that my tree can no longer be of any use to him.

M. DE BÉLISLE.

Faith! You can take your tree elsewhere; it won't take root here. I suggest you turn it into firewood and use it to keep warm.

M. DE L'ECUSSON.

What will become of me? Where should I go? Pray tell me, which country would value my talents?

M. DE BÉLISLE.

Monsieur, gentleman genealogist, I do not see you thriving anywhere; all nations are ridding themselves of these illusions of grandeur, and soon no country at all will want anything to do with them.

M. DE L'ECUSSON.

Noxious revolution! Fatal constitution! Well then, since I am chased from pillar to post I'll join a company of *chasseurs* and take my turn at chasing away others.

M. DE BÉLISLE.

Ladies and Gentlemen, lend me your ears: there is the signal for the civic sermon. Can you hear the music?

They all climb on to the platform except for the poet.

BERTRAND.

Oh! My god, it's so beautiful!

A cannon shot is heard, they all fall down.

I'm dead.

M. DE L'ECUSSON.

That's me gone.

THE POET, *with admiration*.

What a great coup de théâtre! My traitor has flattened the soldiers: that is a truly tragic and dramatic scene.

M. DE BÉLISLE.

Thankfully no one is wounded.

M. DU ROCHER.

As many killed as wounded. No one dead. Say no more.

BERTRAND.

I'm done with fear.

THE POET.

Gentlemen, this incident pleased me so much that the only way I can testify to my satisfaction is to pray you to accept these couplets I wrote for the federation.

NOTICE.

I promised the public two comedies: first I offer it the one that will be the easiest to perform in both the provinces and the capital.

The second one requires great expenditure: everything that took place at the champ de Mars on federation day is to be found in this play; the king is seen advancing towards the altar of the motherland with the president of the national assembly, and pronouncing there the civic oath, and this oath pronounced by the executive power facing the legislative power offers a troubling scene to the audience: that is how I had thought this oath would be pledged.

The public today is muttering that this ceremony did not fulfil its expectations, time created this problem, and in that the king is no more at fault than the national assembly. This is what the public should recognise, instead of inculpating the best of Kings.

This comedy can be found at the widow Duchene and at the palais-royal, in the literary cabinet.